

FUNDING

Some funding is available from Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), some State AML programs, and NPS operating budget. At this time, these sources are limited, uncertain, and inadequate to address the AML problems. As recommended above, funding depends on adequate inventories and planning followed by appropriate coverage in park management and planning documents.

NPS FUNDING SOURCES

Base funding for the AML program as such is currently nonexistent through park and regional budgets. Funds are identified via other sources. Base funding and Fee and Natural Resource Protection funding have been used to address some of the most severe hazards; however, these funds are limited and generally allocated to the more visible problems. The development of a reliable and comprehensive AML inventory increases a park's chances of obtaining baseline funding to remediate the most serious problems. Additional funds may be available from the WASO-MMB, and the regional and WASO Safety offices.

FUNDING UNDER THE SURFACE MINING ACT

The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA) established the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund for the purposes of reclaiming and restoring lands adversely affected by past mining. Monies for the fund come from a reclamation fee imposed on current coal production. The AML program under SMCRA is administered by OSM. Lands eligible for reclamation are those that were mined or affected by mining and abandoned or left inadequately reclaimed prior to August 3, 1977, and for which there is no continuing reclamation responsibility under State or Federal law.

Monies from the fund are available to States and Indian tribes with approved AML programs, and to the Secretary of the Interior. State funding is based on coal production of the State.

While primarily directed at coal mining, noncoal AML sites can be considered for reclamation with SMCRA funds under certain circumstances. Close coordination with the State and OSM are essential in obtaining funding under SMCRA.

SMCRA requires that each participating State or Indian tribe conduct an AML inventory as part of a national AML inventory. In order for a site to be considered for funding under SMCRA, it must be justified as part of this comprehensive inventory. The inventory concentrates on the most serious problems that are adversely affecting public health, safety, and general welfare and are identified according to priorities set by SMCRA.

Priority 1 is an extreme danger problem, Priority 2 has evidence of health, safety, and general welfare problem, and Priority 3 has environmental restoration problems.

Funding from OSM has been used to remediate abandoned coal mines in a few eastern parks. It is only available in States with active coal mining, and is only available for noncoal abandoned mines after all abandoned coal sites have been remediated. These funds are primarily obtained through the State AML programs. For example, the Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Division recently closed seven hazardous mine openings in Dinosaur National Monument. On occasion, NPS has negotiated interagency agreements with OSM for AML funds with conditions similar to those above for inventories and priorities.

EPA FUNDING SOURCES

EPA's Nonpoint Source Funding under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act possibly has funds for AML sites with acid mine drainage and contaminated groundwater. MMB is currently exploring the possibility of this funding source.

MMB also obtained EPA Superfund assistance in funding mine remediation. In April 1989, EPA agreed to undertake clean-up of the McLaren mine tailings adjacent to Yellowstone.